Dancing Star

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AMARA TOUMANOVA-
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INSTITUTION

TARS WHO DANCED

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CONTORTIONIST

DANCE TEACHERS

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Volume 3 Number 3

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ON THE COVER
Tamara Toumanova from a scene in 20th Century-Fox' production 'TONIGHT WE SING'.

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ADVERTISING RATES ON REQUEST.

Dance Lines

by Gordon Keith

IDELIGHT....

Beatrice de Baltazar (Dancngly Yours) wrote us an interesting sidelight about Tamara oumanova which we thought our eaders would also enjoy readng, as it brings one closer to he real Toumanova. We quote n part: *"Toumanova invited me o lunch at Fox Studios. Of all he stars that surrounded us she uite naturally and without even eing aware of it, commanded the dmiration and attention of all he other stars in the dining oom...As we sat there eating he related an incident that appened to her in Cairo. Tounanova's hobby is shoes, which s a likely one in her profesion. She and her mother discovered a terrific shoemaker in airo. His wares were hand made nd the pedantic workmanship mounted to $15 a pair, so Tamara rdered about two dozen pairs to e made in a hurry because they ere leaving for Paris. In fact hey took the shoes still wet. hen they arrived in Paris the hoes had dried, but were much oo small, having shrunk with the rying. Tamara with sparkling yes declared: "Wasn't it forunate they fitted some of my irls in the corps de ballet...?"*

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STARS WHO DANCED

—*From "Secret People."*

"Gigi's" Audrey Hepburn—"Madame Rambert would give us a good rap."

THERE is a common myth that young men and women with no other assets except a pleasant personality and a passion to go on the stage can, in the wonderful world of show business, become stars overnight. Without denying the possibility of an occasional fluke, the truth is that 95 per cent of the cases in which this miracle seems to have occurred are actually people with very thorough training who have just never been fortunate enough to work their way up the ladder slowly. Two performers who have seemed to arrive overnight are Audrey Hepburn, whose first acting role in "Gigi" made her an immediate star last season, and Robert Helpmann, who keeps popping up in leading roles without ever having played small ones.

Miss Hepburn, now playing "Gigi" in Chicago, and Mr. Helpmann, currently supporting another Hepburn in "The Millionairess," recently got together with this writer to discuss how, in reality, one kind of very arduous training, the ballet, was responsible for much of the quick success they enjoyed when they made

the jump into the legitimate theatre.

Said the vital young actress with the chopped haircut: "Ballet is the most completely exhausting thing I have ever done, but if I hadn't been used to pushing myself that hard, I could never have managed the tremendous amount of work necessary to learn in three weeks how to play a leading role in my first real acting job."

Mr. Helpmann smiled, perhaps more in anticipation of a middle-age free of the rigors that go with dancing than in retrospect of a career that is already a legend. "Ballet," he acknowledged, "is exhausting, because you're working with the full extent of your body. When we point, our finger snaps out like a jackknife because our muscles are trained that way. I remember one day when I was playing in the Cleopatra plays with Olivier, I caught Larry flexing his fingers against the side of a chair. He said to me 'I wish I could point straight out, the way you ballet people do'."

"Yes," chimed in Miss Hepburn, "our director, Raymond Rouleau, used to be very amused at the way I stood with my toes pointing out and my legs stiff whenever I'd lean down to pick something up." She jumped up and demonstrated the bending action, adding, "I wasn't conscious of doing it. It just came automatically."

Having movement come automatically is a great help to actors, because it allows them to concentrate on the vocal part of their work. This was particularly so in Miss Hepburn's case because of her meager acting experience. While she started her ballet training at the age of twelve, she had to spend her formative years in Occupied Belgium away from the English-speaking stage. Her health weakened and her adolescence lost, Miss Hepburn shifted immediately after the war to more lucrative musical comedy and cabaret dancing and finally into the cinema where Colette, the author of "Gigi," saw her and recommended her for the title role.

Mr. Helpmann, on the other hand, was fortunate enough not to have his training period interrupted. He began his ballet training in Australia at the age of fourteen. By the time he joined Sadler's Wells Ballet School in 1932, he had already studied with Novikov, Pavlova's partner, and with Karsavina, the master of the mime. Helpmann rose rapidly to leading dancer with Sadler's Wells and created six dramatic ballets for them. These included Milton's "Comus," Shakespeare's "Hamlet," and an original titled "Miracle in the Gorbals." He was thus more mature and theatre-wise by the time he jumped into playing "Hamlet" at Stratford. In his "Hamlet" he "choreographed" for himself a backward fall down a flight of steps in the ghost scene.

"That's another advantage of modern ballet training," explains Helpmann. "We learn to relax completely, which permits us to take stage falls without getting hurt. In 'The Millionairess' Cyril Ritchard, who used to be half of a celebrated dance team, has to be thrown around by Kate, and it would have taken weeks of training if a non-dancer were in the role. The ability to relax is particularly important in Shaw, because there are all those long speeches where you have to stand and listen without moving. The ordinary actor can't possibly prevent himself from doing some little thing which slightly distracts the audience's attention from the speaker. I remember that in 'Caesar and Cleopatra' we were all wearing sandals and I would notice that just before it came their turn to speak the toes of some of the actors would occasionally arch and curl up. I thought I'd discovered something until Olivier told me that Ellen von Volkenberg had a whole theory of acting based on foot relaxation."

"I suppose," said Miss Hepburn holding her hand across her chin in a thoughtful pose, "that we do a lot

of technical things out of good habit. When we relax we never get sloppy. In my case that's simply because when my ballet teacher, Madame Rambert, would catch us folding our arms or slouching our shoulders she'd give us a good rap across the knuckles with a stick. Another thing, dancers learn to feel when their posture is not graceful." The actress jumped up and assumed a series of stances. "This is wrong . . . and this is wrong . . . but this is right."

Mr. Helpmann grinned and joined the demonstration. "Have you ever seen actors, and good ones, too, being given a simple move by a director? They stop, puzzle a bit, and say, 'Now let's see. First I step here . . . and then here . . . and watch out that I don't hit the table . . . no . . . let me try it again.' Ballet people don't have that trouble!"

THE two ex-dancers broke into laughter, and it was obvious that if Mr. Hurok had been on the spot with a contract, they would be back doing "Giselle" within a fortnight.

Actually the reason they have both renounced their hard-learned dancing art is that Miss Hepburn, at twenty-two, thinks she would be too old before she could make up for time lost during the war and become a principal dancer, and Mr. Helpmann, at forty-two, feels too old to continue in strenuous leading roles at Sadler's Wells. In addition there is a cleavage between ballet thinking and theatre thinking. Unless everyone in the cast of a play is ballet-trained, actors like Hepburn and Helpmann have to curb some of their natural impulses.

"In Antony and Cleopatra I used to get up from the table at the same time as Larry," continued Mr. Helpmann, "but I had to fight my ballet training or else I'd have looked like a jack-in-the-box. In ballet getting up is one movement. For actors it is divided into three separate moves."

"Yes," reflected Miss Hepburn, "and the actors frequently have the laugh on us. One night in 'Gigi' I was jumping off a chair and I fell right on my bottom. The audience applauded, but the cast still kids me about it."

"Another thing," added Mr. Helpmann, "I know of only one actress who approaches a line of dialogue the way a dancer goes at doing a pirouette. That's Lynn Fontanne. It's amazing how she'll try each line twenty different ways. However, with most of us acting has to be intuitive."

Intuitive or not, there is no question but that their technical dance training has been most helpful, as it was with that great intuitive performer, the late Gertrude Lawrence. In fact Miss Lawrence and Miss Hepburn met a year ago and at that time Miss Lawrence expressed the wish that if ever a film was to be made of her life, she wanted Miss Hepburn to play the part.

The recognition by a dying star of one who was just emerging was, of course, also intuitive. But behind the intuition was the respect for hard technical work which makes for constant brilliance. This, perhaps, is the difference between fixed stars and stray comets.

—HENRY HEWES.

—From "The Millionairess."

Robert Helpmann—"'jack-in-the-box.'"

(The foregoing article was reprinted from the SATURDAY REVIEW by permission)

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Beatrice de Baltazar

TAMARA TOUMANOVA: AN INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTION

PORTRAYS PAVLOVA

It was inevitable that Tamara Toumanova should be cast for the role of the great ballet star of another decade, Anna Pavlova, in producer, George Jessel's TONIGHT WE SING, the Technicolor musical saga of the Sol Hurok story which Mitchell Leisen directed at 20th Century-Fox.

Mr. Hurok himself used the greatest care in the selection of the ballerina to play this part, because Pavlova was his lifetime friend, and perhaps the most cherished of his artist associates.

PROTEGEE OF PAVLOVA

Tamara Toumanova was a protegee of Pavlova with whom she made her debut in Paris at the age of five. It is with reverence that I write about Toumanova, because I have watched the overwhelming majesty with which she has conducted the development of her career since her Paris days. Although Tamara studied at Mme. Preobrajenska's studio and I with Alicia Vronska I sometimes attended classes to watch the sensational child in class.

HER STYLE IN REVIEW

In reviewing the performance of the INTERNATIONAL BALLET during the War when Toumanova appeared in pas de deux with Andre Eglevsky, I find that her style at that time contained a terrific bravado; and although executed with enlightened understanding for so young a soul, there was so much vitality expressed, her grande battements pointed straight to the heavens with no obvious effort, her adagio jetes were so fast and with great elevation precluding the necessity of her partner doing any lifting, for she was up in the air by herself; her turns were of such incredible speed and duration the breathless audience almost tore down the house when she finished with a balance on toe, completely steadfast, while holding her final pose like an unmovable pillar.

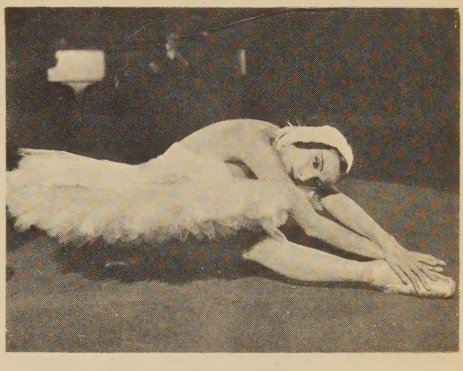
TOO MUCH FOR THE PROFESSION

At that time it was just too much for many of the profession. There were criticisms that ballet was not meant to be so firey, so sensational, with extensions so high, emanating so so much power. It was superhuman! However, it was at this point that a new trend in ballet was born, and Toumanova is the ballerina responsible for today's trend of bigness in execution. Her style of tutu then is the accepted one for today, both here and in Europe; she has also set many other paces.

Some four years ago Touman-

Mrs. Eugenie Toumanova (Tamara's mother) watches as choreographer David Lichine offers Tamara her leg warmers between takes. Wardrobe girl, Marjorie Pletcher adjusts feather toque.

Tamara Toumanova, as Anna Pavlova, dances THE DYING SWAN in the 20th Century-Fox Technicolor musical 'Tonight We Sing'.



ova appeared with Paul Petroff in a pas de deux at the Opera House with the San Francisco Opera Ballet. She had just returned from appearances of long duration in Europe. Her style, although with the same power of command, the same bright expectancy of incredible eagerness, had toned down to a richer mellowness; with a command of balance that was awe-inspiring.

PERFORMS OWN DANCES

In TONIGHT WE SING Toumanova executes every one of her own numbers, whether solo, or pas de deux, ONE TIME. It was a ONE-TIME take at 20th Century-Fox and that was it! To my knowledge no one has achieved this perfection in front of a motion picture camera before.

David Lichine did the choreography for TONIGHT WE SING, while Serge Perrault was brought from the Paris Opera Ballet to partner Toumanova.

BRINGS TEARS TO ONLOOKERS

The great ballerina brought tears to the eyes of those on the set at Fox when she performed THE DYING SWAN. Her applause, something rare for a movie set, was given amid tears.

Tamara also does the pas de deux from DON QUIXOTE, AUTUMN LEAVES, the DRAGON FLY and VALSE CAPRICE. The costume and decor are exquisite.

DANCING IS HER LIFE

While Tamara Toumanova is a whole balletomane cult in Europe, she is proud of her American citizenship. She adores her husband, Casey Robinson, the successful producer at Fox, and enjoys her beautiful Beverly Hills home, but she would perish without her dance. Both her husband and her mother, Princess Eugenie Toumanova, understand this fully, and both give their whole-hearted support.

NOTED ARTISTS HAVE PAINTED HER

Some of the world's most noted artists, including Picasso, Salvadore Dali, Juan Miro, Andre Deraim, Christian Bernard, De Chirico, Jean Cocteau, Savinio, Marie Laurencin, Marc Chagall, have designed ballets for Toumanova and painted her portrait.

Likewise, she has been lensed by Internationally famous photographers, including Cecil Beaton, Man Ray, Grodon Anthony, Goldberg, Howningen-Huen, Maurice Seymour and Baron.

☞

DANCINGLY YOURS (from page 65)

DANCED BEFORE ROYALTY

She has danced before the crowned heads of Europe, including Queen Juliana of the Netherlands, the late King Edward and Queen Elizabeth of Britain, the late George V, the present Queen Elizabeth, the King of Spain, the King of Belgium, King Farouk, the late King Gustav, President Vincent Auriol of France.

She has danced before the peoples of most European, North African, North and South American countries, as well as Egypt and Australia, and has covered more air miles for her performances than any other ballerina.

To tell you more in this wonderful little magazine, succinct and important as it is to to the dance world of today, DANCING STAR would need a series of articles about this great personality who so keenly understands her obligation to her job and who so dearly loves humanity that she spreads her message of purity in ballet throughout the world...

Tamara Toumanova as Anna Pavlova and David Wayne as Sol Hurok rehearse their lines for 'Tonight We Sing'.

NOTE: For additional photos and interesting sidelights on Tamara Toumanova, see the April issue of the DANCING STAR....

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The Girl Who Danced A Dream

by Peggy Shaw

I looked up. The girl standing at my desk was lovely.

'Yes?' I said.

'I'm Elizabeth,' she smiled, 'I hope I'm not too late to enroll in your ballet class. You see, it means so much to me.'

Her words were precise, her gaze direct. I didn't know what there was about this girl which interested me, but I knew that somehow she was different. I also knew that I couldn't tell her that my classes were full, and that I had closed the registrations.

I motioned to a chair. 'Sit here, Elizabeth and tell me just why it's so important that you study ballet.'

She told me her story, and as she talked she never once took her eyes from my face. She was totally deaf. Her deafness, she told me, had been caused by a serious illness during her early childhood. She had been placed in a good school where she learned lip reading. As she grew up she hated the feeling of being different from other girls. She wanted desperately to do something about it. Elizabeth had dreams. She had vision. She had always loved dancing and she wanted to learn how. But could she, when she couldn't even hear the music?

I studied her as she told her story. She was not only an attractive, blue-eyed blonde, but intelligent as well. I felt that if she had not told me she was deaf, it would have been sometime before I would have made the discovery. She had read my lips so well.

Elizabeth's family had moved to the university town so that she could live at home during her college years.

'Mother used to take me to the Ballet whenever we could afford it,' she went on. 'It was

THE GIRL WHO DANCED A DREAM
(from page 67)

so wonderful, for I've always loved dancing.'

This girl interested me more than anyone I had ever known. Her problem was a challenge. For one thing, in a totally deaf person the semi-circular canals in the ear which control much of the body's equilibrium can not carry out their normal function; consequently balance is impaired. It must have been her sincere eagerness which decided my course of action.

'Come to my apartment tonight, Elizabeth, and we'll talk some more. She thanked me profusely and when she had gone I sat at my desk wondering just how to tackle this problem...

It was early when Elizabeth arrived that evening, and late when she left. We discussed her problem from every conceivable angle. To me, the greatest obstacle was her inability to hear the music, or feel the rhythm, the very inspiration upon which dance is founded. When I brought this up, Elizabeth brightened.

'Miss Peggy,' she said anxiously, 'When mother and I used to go to the Ballet, we always got seats as close to the orchestra as possible. That way I could feel the vibration through the floor...it seemed to come right up through my toes.'

That was the key to our problem. Now I knew what I had to do. 'Do you know anyone at the University?' I asked.

'No. We just moved here.'

'Good. For the present you are not to tell anyone that you are deaf. Promise, Elizabeth?'

She nodded. 'I'll do what ever you say.'

I felt this would give her a better chance with the other girls for a while. She would not feel so keenly the barrier which her deafness had erected. I made an appointment with her for the next day to meet my pianist, the only other person who would share our experiment. There were still three days before school officially opened. That would give us a little additional time.

Elizabeth arrived the next day tense with excitement. I handed her one of my practice costumes and asked her to put it on. I had her remove her shoes for we were to dance barefooted. I explained that balance was much better that way. I placed her fingers lightly on the ballet barre and we went to work.

'First we must concentrate on the exercises which strengthen the back. They are the ones which aid the balance. You are to do them every day. This is most important.'

We walked over to the piano and I asked my accompanist to play something with a direct, well defined beat. This would be the real test.

'Can you feel anything, Elizabeth?'

She remained silent, motionless, for minute, and then : 'Yes. Yes! I can feel it. I can feel the music!'

'Stamp it out. Stamp out the beat just as you feel it.'

I was caught up in the excitement with her as I listened to her keep perfect time with the piano. Elizabeth proved an ideal pupil. For three days she worked doggedly with great determination....

And then classes started. The ballet students in their silk practice costumes made a radiant picture as they took their places at the barre for roll call. Elizabeth lined up with the fifty girls, none of whom knew she was deaf. As I came to her name I looked directly at her. She answered clearly.

I saw to it that she was as close to the piano as possible. She did very well and I

was indeed proud of her.

With each passing day, Elizabeth improved. She had unbelievable grace, and with it that rare quality which few possess--the divine spark....

As the days went, it became impossible to keep our secret. The girls soon learned that Elizabeth was deaf, but now, it made no difference. She could do everything they did in class, and they never thought of her as being different. She was one of them, and they loved her...

At the end of every school year I was required to present a large Ballet for the entire University. It was a huge undertaking, and very professional. The girls who were fortunate enough to have been elected to our National Dance Club during the year were given leads, or danced the solos...

One day after class I took Elizabeth aside. 'I have a surprise for you Elizabeth. You're going to dance a solo in the Ballet.'

For a long moment she merely stared at me without uttering a sound. 'Don't you understand, Elizabeth? You're dancing a a solo.'

'A solo! Oh, Miss Peggy,' she cried, throwing her arms about me, 'how can I ever thank you?'

'You don't have to thank me, Elizabeth. You've worked hard and you've earned it,' I told her.

Then came the big night. As Elizabeth stood in the wings awaiting her cue, I could not help noticing how pale and nervous she looked. But it wasn't until the performance was about to start that she came over to where I was standing, her voice trembling, she said:

'Miss Peggy, I'm so shaky I, I don't think I can go on.'

Although I tried to conceal my emotions, I was stunned. I tried to reason: 'But this is what you've always wanted...this is the dream you thought would never come true.' The pianist was beginning her introduction. 'This is it, Elizabeth!' I gave her a gentle pat as she stepped from the wings. Her head high, she smiled assurance as the spotlight followed her every movement.

Elizabeth's dance was little short of sensational. I had only one regret...but then, a girl who danced a dream did not need to hear the great ovation which proclaimed her an artist...

-CURTAIN-

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Here's one way to keep from tracking up the kitchen floor.

Paul McKinstry doesn't seem to mind the limited leg room the small table offers.

Confessions Of A Contortionist

as told to DAVID STORM

From all the fantastic stories I'd heard about contortionist, Paul McKinstry, I wouldn't have been at all surprised if I'd have had to interview him from a chandelier.

Imagine the let down, then, when I called at the modest Mc Kinstry home in Richmond, California, and was greeted by a slight, mild-mannered, average appearing individual with an ingratiating personality.

'My name's Storm. Our magazine, Dancing Star, wrote you for an interview,' I said by way of introduction.

'Well, I don't know much about this interviewing stuff,' he laughed, 'but whatever it is you want to know, just fire away and I'll try to give you the answers.'

'There won't be anything formal about our talk,' I said when we had seated ourselves comfortably in what appeared to be a combination den and library.

'To begin with Paul, have you ever been a professional performer?'

He shook his head. 'I'm a stillman for Union Oil by trade, but I've performed all over the country. USO shows, clubs, lodges hospitals; you name 'em, I've played 'em. But mainly because I get a kick out of entertaining folks. I guess I'm what you'd call a professional amateur,' he grinned.

'In order to become as limber as you are, you must have started lessons as soon as you were able to walk.'

'You're wrong, there. I took my first acrobatic lesson at the age of thirty-eight,' he said, standing up.

I watched while he leaned over and touched both elbows to the floor without so much as bending a knee. 'You must be double jointed, then, to be able to go through all the contortions you do with such a late start in life.'

'That's what everyone seems

CONFESSIONS OF A CONTORTIONIST (cont'd from page 71)

to think, but the truth is, doctors claim there's no such thing as double jointedness. 'Excuse me for stretching that way,' he apologized as he settled back in his chair.

'Paul, I think our readers might like to know more about your background...what makes you tick...'

'Sort of a confession story, maybe?'

'What ever you want to confess,' I laughed. But suppose you begin at the beginning and tell us in your own words just how you happened to become a 'professional amateur contortionist.'

'Well, to start with, I was born on a Pennsylvania farm. There were thirteen of us. Eight boys and five girls, and every one of us limber as dishrags.

'As a small kid I used to like nothing better than hanging around Jake Reitz's blacksmith shop. I knew that if I hung around long enough I'd eventually ride every horse in the vicinity. Jake always used to let me pull off the old shoes as the horses were brought in to be reshod and afterward I'd get to ride them around the lot; but there was one catch to it...Jake knew how unusually limber I was, so as a sort of special show for his customers he'd always make me go through all sorts of contortions, backbends, splits, and any other pretzel-bending stunts he could think up. If I told him I didn't feel up to it, he'd send me a scootin' , which meant the end of my riding. It didn't take me long to catch on that if I wanted to hang around Jake and the horses I'd have to make with the acrobatics. Only in those days, I didn't think of the tricks I did as being acrobatics.

'You might say that old Jake was the first one to exploit my so-called talents...at least he gave me my first taste of entertaining folks...and I liked it. That is I liked it until I became girl-conscious, then everything changed and I became very selfconscious about my contortionistic abilities. I think what brought on this super sensitive attitude was the discovery that whenever I completely relaxed my arms and legs would flop around like a skeleton--a thing that never seemed to happen to other boys and girls my age. Of course they'd always laugh and poke fun at me, so for years I made sure never to display my doubtful talents around strangers.'

'How did you manage to over come this selfconsciousness?' I asked.

Paul thought a moment, then went on. 'I suppose the thing actually responsible for my getting out of the selfconscious rut was an impromptu high-kick contest a group of us held one night in a beer parlor in Pinole California. I was thirty-seven and it was the first time since my adolescent days that I really let myself go in public. The contest evolved around who could kick the chandelier that hung from the center of the ceiling. The Mayor of Pinole happened to be present at the time and he was so impressed with the apparent ease with which I kicked the chandelier that he made me promise then and there that I'd go and take some training from a good acrobatic teacher.

'Charley Baker was teaching in Oakland, California at the time. I looked him up and showed him what I could do. They were mostly things I'd seen done on the stage, or made up myself. Although I could kick as high as I could reach, I couldn't even do a simple cartwheel. Well to make the story short, in four years time I was doing things I'd never dreamed possible, as well as having polished off a number of show-stopping routines. ...And that's just about all there is to tell.'

'Are you still studying,

Rumora & Sisley, rising young dance team, recently appeared in a ballet Recital, 'Retreat To Reality.' The music was composed by Miss Sisley.

aul?' I asked.

'I still keep in shape with y exercises, and several times year I hit for Hollywood for ome reconditioning and brushup ork with Charley. And say, if ou're ever down that way it ight pay you to look up Charley aker, he could probably give ou just the story you want.'

EDITOR'S NOTE: Although the story David Storm got from Paul McKinstry was just what we wanted, the Editors of the Dancing Star took Mr. McKinstry's suggestion. We sent Mr. Storm south where he not only got some pertinent facts regarding the teaching of contortion work, but some more excellent pictures of Paul, as well...They'll appear in a forthcoming issue of the Dancing Star.

MISCELLANY...

Katherine Flowers, concert dancer, will have her book, 'Bamboula To Ballet' published this Fall.

The Luva Stratton Ballet School in San Jose, Calif., presented the first of a series of Studio Recitals on Sunday afternoon, Feb. 22nd. Original dance compositions were by Misses Leilani Johnson, Elaine Rose, Dorothy Linane, Beverly Coultas and Sylvia Ritchie.

The American Squares Summer School at Camp Ihduhapi, Loretto, Minnesota, will be held from August 23rd to the 30th.

Connecticut College School of the Dance presents its 6th Annual Dance Festival the week of August 17th in New London, Conn.

In February Katherine Flowers and Company presented 'Bamboula To Bop', a contemporary re-creation of Negro dance forms depicting the evolution of dancing in the U.S., and the Negro's contributions to American Dancing.

Part one concerns the story of the first slaves which were brought to America in 1619.

Part two is set in 1712 when the slaves were imported into Louisiana Territory and given the freedom to express their native folklore.

Choreography was by Katherine Flowers. The dancers included: Theodore Crumb, Daniel Lloyd, Jane Craddock, Jean Thompson,

In March the troupe is scheduled to tour Israel where they will present 25 concerts.

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DIARY OF A CAREER GIRL

This is the 10th installment of an actual day - by - day diary written by dancer, Peachie Kane, *who is at present furthering her theatrical career by studying at the Pasadena Community Playhouse.*

(Copyright 1953 by *Danstar* Press)

Sun. Nov. 25th

Went to 12 O'Clock Mass and then to Sheetz for a bite to eat. This afternoon I went to school and practiced dancing from 3 to 5. I keep getting a lot of fancy ideas for dance projects, but I never seem to have time to work them out. I certainly miss my private lessons. I'm one of those persons who needs a dance teacher, but I guess there are very few, if any who don't...

Went to dinner with Craig Alberts. It was a little Italian restaurant. We stayed there for over two hours, talking and eating--mostly talking. Craig certainly has a remarkable knowledge of writers, artists and the arts in general. He talked of many fabulous people he knows in the world of art. It was so interesting I made him talk and talk. Usually he's very quiet, but when he gets started on subjects he loves, he really gets wound up. I learned a great deal from that discussion.

Mon. Nov. 26th

Today we were finally cast! Another girl and myself were given a choice of either Helen or Cassandra. Neither of us is sure which part we want. They're both good....

At noon, I went to my mail box and found a little note. It was from George Phelps (a director) asking me to be at rehearsal of Southern Exposure', tomorrow night. I was too excited for words! That is a main stage production starring Joan Taylor! First year students are considered most fortunate to be given a 'walk on' in a main stage show. Four other girls and myself were called...

Tonight will be the last time I can work until January. There's just too much rehearsing to be done...

Tues. Nov. 27th

This A.M. we rehearsed 'Trojan Women' until 11:30, then we went to an assembly at mainstage. The stars of 'Cocktail Party' (Vincent Price and Marsha Hunt) were to speak to us. Vincent Price could not come because of some emergency at his studio, but Miss Hunt gave us a beautiful talk on theatre along with some of her experiences as an actress. She was perfectly charming. Her poise and naturalness completely captivated all of us...

Tonight I went to rehearsal for 'Southern Exposure.' I am to be one of a group of college students visiting and old Southern mansion. I have one wonderful line; and we are onstage for a whole scene! I'm so happy I could burst! After rehearsal I went to see an original play at the Patio Theatre. Craig held a critique after the show. Its purpose was to get ideas from the audience on how the play could be improved, etc....

Wed. Nov. 28th

We rehearsed this morning

t main stage for 3½ hours. Al as really driving us. Today I ead for the part of 'Cassandra' nd he liked the way I did it so ow I am to do it in the show. Cassandra' is an electrifying haracter--something like Ophelia' in 'Hamlet.' She is emi insane. The part requires lot of hysterical dancing round the stage, and thanks to y dance training, it wasn't hard or me to do.

Al wasn't going to use any tylized Greek movements for the horus. He said that unless hey're done well, they're terible! However, I spoke to him fter class about it, and he beame more interested when I said had a few ideas for some moveents. Because he knew I had ad dance training, he asked me o be assistant dance director. have to do all the blocking or the chorus. It's going to e quite a job, but I'm glad I ot the chance to do it...

Today we saw slides in, Manners and Customs', of Greek culpture and architecture. fter one understands the Greeks little better, their art seems ore beautiful.

In speech, we're working on he elimination of 'nasality' and n developing 'true nasal resnance.' It's one of the hardst phases of speech training.

This afternoon I received most wonderful letter from my other. She should have been a riter, she can write the finest etters. She and my father and y brother, Jimmy are arriving n San Francsico from Guam Dec. 2th. They are coming down here o see me on Dec. 20th, my birthay. They can see the Greek how the 21st and then I'll be ble to go home with them for mas vacation. I can hardly ait!

hurs. Nov. 29th

We rehearsed 'Trojan Women' gain this A.M. We seem to be n one of those rehearsal lulls n which we can't let go of our cripts long enough to really act; and we can't say two lines without stopping for directions in blocking. I think this stage of a production is the most tedious. Even though there is actually no physical exertion, we are very tired by noon. It's most disconcerting to work yourself into a very high emotional state (in some cases, hysteria) as many of us have to, only to be cut off in the middle of a scene and told to go back and start over again. That means you've got to build up to hysteria all over again. So naturally, we don't leave that class 'fresh as daisies'. But that's all a part of theatre and must be accepted as such....

This afternoon the whole school went to mainstage to see a 2nd year dance project. It was very well done. Few of the students who performed have had much dance training, and what they have learned from their instruction is amazing. Of course the more expressive, less technical type of dance was used as the performers are essentially actors. The theme was an abstraction depicting good versus evil. The lighting was beautiful, the set perfect and the students proved themselves to have a great deal of imagination and understanding of movement, both of which are necessities in theatre...

Tonight I went to rehearsal for Southern Exposure. Joan Taylor and her husband, Lennie Freeman were there. Craig and I went to dinner with them afterward.

(To be continued)

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Phil Osterhouse, DMA President, is shown presenting an official invitation to screen actress, Jane Russell, inviting her to be a guest at the coming Dance Masters of America Convention, to be held at the Sir Francis Drake Hotel in San Francisco from June 28th through July 2nd. Left to right: Miss Russell, Jack Cole, Margaret Gay, Eddie Gay, Evelyn and Phil Osterhouse.

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NEWS BRIEFS

Dancer Paul Draper is at work preparing for a dance presentation which will be held in at a Paris concert hall. Draper is currently dancing nightly in an exclusive Paris club.

No longer is it so easy to extract from $5 an hour and up from lonely dance prospects... Because female companionship is much easier to come by, taxi dancers and dime-dance halls, are on the wane. In the early thirties statistics show there were some 2,000 Taxi dances throughout the country--today there are a mere handful.

Jean Babilee is now head dancer and choreographer for the Paris Opera Ballet. Ballet master is still Serge Lifar.

Veteran actor, Charles Coburn has a special recipe for keeping young at 75. 'I eat what I want, drink what I want, play poker...' Coburn plays a wealthy sugar daddy in 'Gentlemen Prefer Blondes.' He claims that on the nights he doesn't play poker he goes dancing. 'I know all the steps but jitterbug and I'm apt to try that any moment...'

Donald O'Connor will take Fred Astaire's place with Bing Crosby in Paramount's 'White Christmas.'

The New York City Ballet recently completed a 12 week run at City Center in N.Y.C. This is a record for a continuous showing of a ballet unit in America. The troupe is making their first Coast tour this summer, with four weeks scheduled for Los Angeles.

Bill Callahan, Tap Dancer, quit the musical 'Two's Company' because of 'some alleged disagreement about taking bows with two chorus girls,' says Earl Wilson in his syndicated column.

Something new in bedwear is on the market. It is a lace tutu affair made to resemble a ballet costume. The brief panties are frilled with three rows, fore and aft, of ruffles.

The Canadian National Ballet which was established only three years ago has had a very successful run this past season. Celia Franca is Prima Ballerina. She was formerly with Sadler's Wells.

Ludmilla Tcherina will appear in an Orson Welles ballet in March. She is also soon to be married to industrialist, Raymond Roy, of Paris. Her former husband and dance partner, Edmond Audran, was killed last year in an auto accident. They appeared together in the film 'Red Shoes.'

The dance team of Rosario & Antonio have come to the parting of the ways after seven years of performing together. They broke up in Paris where Antonio is laying plans to form his own unit this spring in Spain.

Chorus girl, Gretchen Wyler, of 'Guys and Dolls' kicked her partner, Carl Erberle so hard during one of their dance numbers that he had to have six stitches taken over his left eye.

Rene Jeanmaire, at present in Paris, is being sought for 'The Girl in Pink Tights.' Scheduled to arrive in New York some time in March, she plans to discuss the project with Shepard Traube, who, in partnership with Gordon Pollock and Donald Hershey, produced 'Time Out For Ginger.'

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QUALIFICATIONS UNLIMITED

AT an open meeting convened in London on Sunday last by one of the societies of teachers of dancing there was an item on the agenda as to whether the profession was becoming overcrowded.

This was introduced to the solely professional audience as a subject for debate, and many and varied opinions were expressed. There can be no doubt in anybody's mind that there have been many additions to the professional ranks since the end of the war and, further, that the outlook in some quarters has been quantity and not quality. The inference, of course, is that the professional societies—only some of them, of course—have lowered the standard of their entrance examinations with an eye on membership fees and, more important, medal test fees. This is, of course, good business, but being a professional body is it good ethics?

Can anyone in their right senses imagine other professional bodies lowering the standard of their entrance examinations to attract more members — the doctors, the dentists, the accountants and many others? To the contrary, every year it becomes more difficult to obtain qualifications in these professions—the standard becomes increasingly higher and the profession more respected.

In the dancing profession, however, the god of larger and larger membership is dimming the eyes of the executives of some of the professional dancing organisations to the interests of their members of long standing. If this attitude persists for much longer it can easily become a menace and a danger to the genuine, highly trained and well-qualified teacher.

The late Byron Davies — a man of wide experience in the dancing business and a man whose opinions were widely respected—once made the suggestion through the columns of this newspaper that there should only be one qualification for a teacher of dancing, and that it should be very difficult to obtain. For a teacher to advertise that he or she was a "Fellow of Dancing" could convey a real something to the public at large. At present the multitudinous qualifications of Associates, Members, Fellows, of the many societies, some Comm., some Highly Comm., some B.B., some O.T.B. and what have you are not only becoming more confusing, but progressively of less value.

There is no need for the societies or associations to lose their identities, but there should be some mutual understanding on the question of standard.

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DANCE TEACHERS' ASSOCIATIONS

YOU ARE WELCOME TO SEND NEWS OF YOUR ASSOCIATION TO THIS COLUMN

ASSOCIATED DANCING TEACHERS of SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA held a one-day Normal School, Feb. 8th, at Hollywood Roosevelt Hotel, in Hollywood. Faculty included: Virginia Valodin, Comedy Hawaiian Audrey Share, Ballet, Nancy Jackson, Modern, Ronald Benefiel, Ballroom; Lance and Rae Stevens, Ballroom; Al Gilbert, Children's Dances; Louis Da Pron Tap; Trinidad Goni, Spanish. Tom Sheehy was M.C. and Margarita Otero and Eugenia Hoffer were on the reception and registration committee. Guests of honor were screen stars, Arlene Dahl and Fernando Lamas.

DANCING MASTERS of WISCONSIN held their Annual Joint Meeting with the **CHICAGO NATIONAL ASSOCIATION of DANCING MASTERS** on Jan. 18th, in Milwaukee, at the Pfister Hotel. Faculty members included: Ardath Ann, Baton; Richard Verhoeven, Tap; Dawn Fischer, Children's Work; Charlotte Heil, Tap; Elisa Stigler, Spanish Castanet; Marie Buczkowski, Ballet and Louis Girard, Ballroom. Jack Wolfram was the assistant Educational Director for the day. Edna Christensen, Educational Director, worked out this year's program.

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PENNSYLVANIA ASSOCIATION of DANCE TEACHERS held their 2nd Annual Dance at the Jay Dash Dance Studios, Feb. 15th, in Philadelphia.

DANCE MASTERS of OHIO held a one-day Convention, Mar. 1st, at the Hollenden Hotel in Cleveland. Faculty members were: Marilyn Krall, Baton; Jimmy Sutton, Tap & Ballroom; Enid Ricardeau, Ballet, Modern & Spanish; Audrey Ann Schultz, Children's Dances.

DANCE TEACHERS' CLUB of CONNECTICUT held their Feb. 15th meeting at the Florence M. Greenland Studio in West Hartford. Tatiana Chamie, Ballet Mistress of New York City taught Ballet.

BLESSED EVENTS: Mrs. Helyn Flanagan Mulcahy and 'Johnnie' are proud parents of baby 'Coleen'. Future Blessed Eventers include: Lillian Duntz Sjavall Mrs. Elvai Strom and Betty Diachenko... Some 40 members attended the 33rd Annual Meeting at the Corner House in Farmington. Mr. Soby was the genial Toastmaster.

DANCE MASTERS of CALIFORNIA held their monthly meeting Feb. 1st at the Bellevue Hotel in San Francisco. Faculty included: Marta Henke, Ballet; Rose Ann Sayler, Tap. An open forum was held for Ballroom.... **DANCE MASTERS of AMERICA** in cooperation with **DANCE MASTERS of CALIFORNIA** and the **ASSOCIATED DANCE TEACHERS of SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA**, is bringing a Convention to the West Coast, June 28th thru July 2nd., at the Hotel Sir Francis Drake, in San Francisco. Top-flight teachers from both East and West will be on the huge faculty.

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Peggy Shaw, author of 'The Girl Who Danced A Dream' page 67, and her daughter, Pat.

CONTRIBUTOR

Peggy Shaw (THE GIRL WHO DANCED A DREAM) writes... 'I have a degree in physical ed and have studied dancing under Chalif, Kobeleff, St. Denis, Kreutzberg and Portia Mansfield to mention a few. I have also done professional work with the Metropolitan Opera and have had my own studios in Illinois and New York. For four years I headed the dance department at the Villa De Chantal, a private school for girls. I have done work in sculpture and creative writing. Have had articles on the dance published in newspapers and Dance Magazine. At present I'm working on fiction.

I have a very handsome husband who has done much work in the Theatre, and a twenty year-old daughter who is an Art major at the University of California at Santa Barbara...'

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